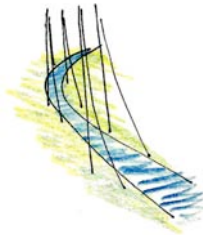


## Lessons from Abroad Regional Thinking from Øresund to Cascadia

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Too often, cities within a region compete with each other when they would be far better off cooperating with each other even when this means crossing country borders. This is the lesson from the northwest corner of Europe to the northwest corner of North America. Malmo, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark provide an example of how regional cooperation can create benefits for cities of all sizes particularly in the areas of transportation and land use.

Copenhagen, Denmark had a problem. A large city by northern European standards, it was still too small to effectively compete with larger European cities such as London, Paris and Berlin for attracting new industry, such as the exciting emerging biotech field. Malmo, Sweden also had a problem. It was often ignored by its capital city, Stockholm, 381 miles away. Perhaps it was natural that Malmo and Copenhagen started eyeing each other; after all they are located only 21 miles apart from each other and Malmo had historically been a part of Denmark though not since 1658! In order to facilitate cooperation, it was determined that there should be a fixed link in the form of a bridge to connect the two cities, which to date had been accessible to each other only by ferry. The benefit to Sweden was great. Not only would Malmo and Copenhagen have easy access to each other by car, bus and train, but Sweden would have a much faster connection to continental Europe. The bridge, with a combined two-track rail and four-lane road across the Øresund strait, was inaugurated in 2000 by Danish Queen Margrethe II, and her Swedish counterpart King Carl XVI Gustaf. The official name of the bridge is the Øresundsbron, a compromise between the Swedish and Danish languages, and a symbol of the new identity of the people of the region, who are now considered Øresund citizens in addition to their heritage identity. The public transport by rail is operated jointly by the Swedish SJ and Skåne commuter rail and the Danish Danske Statsbaner. With trains, busses and ferries serving the region, a car is not necessary.



*The Øresund Bridge was the key to successful regional cooperation*

The new connection between Malmo and Copenhagen facilitated much more than transport. The two cities had traditionally competed with each other on port traffic. Now that they were together in one region, it was decided to see how to best leverage the port facilities in the two cities for mutual benefit. The ports of Copenhagen and Malmö merged in 2001 to

form a single company, Copenhagen Malmö Port (CMP). The CMP is equally owned by the Port of Copenhagen A/S (50%) and Port of Malmö AB (50%). Since merging into the CMP, annual profits, net sales and port volumes have increased for the sixth year in a row. Another benefit of the regional approach is that the Port of Copenhagen, no longer involved with operating commercial port activities which are now handled by the CMP, has been busy transforming old dockside areas into new parts of the city. One of the most interesting developments is the transformation of two large grain silos into very expensive modern apartment buildings.



*Former grain silos turned into apartments with a pedestrian and bike only bridge*

In addition to facilitating transportation, commerce, and new urban developments, regional cooperation between the two cities has made it possible for people to work in Copenhagen, but live in lower cost Malmö. The 35-minute train ride across the bridge made the physical commute possible, but the two cities still had much work to do to bridge tax and benefits policies. This has now largely been accomplished, and by the significant increase in commuter traffic over the past few years, it is clear that Danes and Swedes are taking advantage of the benefits of regional cooperation.

Although the idea of an autonomous Cascadian state first arose after Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark into the Pacific Northwest in 1803, and was put forth in more recent years by Ernest Callenbach in his book *Ecotopia*, Cascadia has been a term in concept only. Although it is unlikely that the area from British Columbia to Oregon would succeed from the rest of the United States, there are no doubt regional synergies that could and should be exploited. The Øresund Region of Denmark is one example of how regional cooperation can provide great benefits for citizens and cities.

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